

Economic Recovery Act

- President Obama will introduce bill on January 20th
 - Include funding for surface transportation, water and sewer, hospitals, schools, etc.
 - Focus has been on projects that can be completed within 90-120 days
 - Highways – through Surface Transportation Program
 - Transit – through section 5307 program
- Congress complete action by Mid-February

Economic Recovery Act

- Possibility of a companion bill to Economic Recovery Act
 - Focus would be projects to be completed within two year period
 - Likely be distributed through existing surface transportation programs
- Not clear if there will be projects but funds will be distributed through discretionary programs
- Some discussion of this bill extending SAFETEA-LU for one year and including a gasoline tax

Economic Recovery Act

- What can MARTA and region do now?
 - Develop project priorities and communicate those priorities to Congress
 - Focus should be on projects that have cleared or will clear NEPA and can go to construction in two years
 - If there will be earmarks, expect request for projects from Georgia delegation early next year
- Unclear what actions, i.e. amending fiscally constrained TIP, must be taken to expend funds

Economic Recovery Act

- Center for American Progress
 - Think Tank headed by John Podesta – key player on Obama Transition Team
 - Propose \$18 billion for ready to go highway projects
 - Propose \$19 billion for transit – Green Job Creation
 - \$2 billion for transit fare reductions
 - \$5 billion for New Start investments
 - \$4 billion for replacing aging buses and acquiring rail cars
 - \$8 billion for transit infrastructure

Surface Transportation Authorization

- No clear overriding Federal policy
 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs)?
 - Freight movement?
 - Economic competitiveness?
 - Reducing consumption of foreign oil?
- Funding will impact policy
 - Highway Trust Fund will run out of money mid-Summer
 - Is there political will to raise gasoline tax?
 - No clearly defined alternative that will grow in face of reduced travel and increasing CAFÉ standards

Surface Transportation Authorization

- Enhanced focus on metropolitan areas
 - Expect more integrated MPO planning process
 - Develop program of highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects
 - Assess impact on land use, housing, goods movement and resulting impacts on GHGs
- Programs adjusted to reflect priority
 - Merger of Surface Transportation Program and Congestion Mitigation Program
 - Creation of Metro Mobility program in addition to existing programs
 - Expand Projects of Regional and National Significance

Surface Transportation Authorization

- Revised New Starts/Small Starts program
 - Project evaluation Criteria
 - Reduce emphasis on cost effectiveness (user benefits)
 - Enhance emphasis on local decisions on land use and supportive policies to promote economic development
 - Rejuvenate environmental benefits to measure GHGs
 - Modify project advancement to expedite project once approved for preliminary engineering
 - Reduce current 8-10 years to 4-6 years from initiating alternatives analysis to execution of Full Funding Grant Agreement
 - Reward communities that have dedicated funding source by giving credit towards local match for a New Starts if project built with local funds
 - Financial Plan will require adoption of funding source that will provide funds for construction as well as operate and maintain system

Surface Transportation Authorization

- Anticipated Schedule
 - Neither TEA-21 nor SAFETEA-LU were completed on-time
 - White House will want to weigh-in but Secretary won't be confirmed until late February or early March and confirmation of FHWA and FTA Administrators until late Spring
 - Expect delays but Congress must address program funding for any extension of SAFETEA-LU or six year authorization
- Project Requests
 - Expect Congress to require projects to be submitted by March
 - New Starts/Small Starts – only authorization
 - Rely on existing categories (e.g. bus and bus facilities, Transportation and Community System Preservation, PRNS) for project submittals but programs may ultimately change